

NEW AND IMPROVED SANITARY TOOTHBRUSH

by

Michelle Woods and Daniel Ferrante

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

Not applicable.

REFERENCE TO A SEQUENCE LISTING

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention.

The present invention relates to a sanitary toothbrush that is designed to hang in an upside down fashion, or by the end of the handle opposite the brush portion of the toothbrush, and by doing so creates a cleaner and more sanitary method of storing the toothbrush after use. Specifically, the object of the present invention is to provide a more safe and secure method of toothbrush storage by allowing for a toothbrush to be suspended upside down by its terminal end thereby creating a more sanitary manner with which to store the toothbrush between use. The present version of the invention incorporates an inherent property of the toothbrush itself, namely the proximal end of the toothbrush – the end of the toothbrush handle closer to the hand when in use – that is

generally comprised of a curved shape in the form of a hook for hanging the toothbrush. This curved proximal end of the toothbrush handle thereby allows a user to store the toothbrush by hanging it in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, hanging the improved toothbrush from a standard toothbrush holder commonly found in almost all bathrooms.

Typically, other methods of toothbrush storage, such as resting on a shelf, countertop, enclosed toothbrush holder or other methods, have contributed to unsanitary oral hygiene and have allowed for the transfer of bacteria and other germs that may contribute to other health ailments. Suspending a toothbrush in an upside down manner, however, allows for air drying of the brush portion without the toothbrush coming into direct contact with other potential germ carrying media or surfaces, such as counter tops, medicine cabinet shelving, and in particular, conventional toothbrush holders. Hanging the toothbrush in this fashion further protects the toothbrush, and in particular the brush portion, from coming into contact with other contaminants that may be found in the bathroom, for example, cleaning solution residue on a countertop, or the combination of toothpaste and water residue that accumulates on the toothbrush holder or brush itself. In addition, when the present invention is suspended in its upside down manner, water, toothpaste and mouth residues are allowed to drip freely from the brush portion of toothbrush, as opposed to trickling down the handle portion of the toothbrush when it is stored in a more conventional manner in a standard toothbrush holder. The present invention serves many purposes and is a simple, easy and effective approach to a cleaner and more sanitary means of storing and maintaining a toothbrush.

The present invention utilizes a hanging or suspended storage approach by way of incorporating a curved or hook like shape to the proximal end to the handle of the toothbrush, with the brush portion of the toothbrush located at the distal end of the toothbrush handle. This curved shape to the end of the handle with its hook like feature allows the toothbrush to be hooked onto a standard toothbrush holder, or onto any hook, peg, or other device commonly known to those skilled in the art, that is mounted to a wall, within a medicine cabinet, or onto almost any vertical surface in a bathroom. The present invention may also be hooked onto any apparatus, device or elevated horizontal surface containing at least one hole for engaging the curved end of the toothbrush handle. Such a surface is present in a standard toothbrush holder. The present invention with its curved proximal end does not permit conventional storage in a standard toothbrush holder, thereby forcing the user to store the toothbrush in the cleaner and more sanitary position of hanging it from the toothbrush holder.

In addition to serving the general adult population, the curved end of the toothbrush handle allows for easy gripping and holding by children with small hands and whose arm and hand strength is less than that of an adult. It is therefore a further object of the present invention to provide children with an easier means to grip the toothbrush. The curved portion of the handle will allow a child to grip the toothbrush with greater stability as the handle actually cradles the child's hand for ease of use. Thus, children who have difficulty holding a standard toothbrush will find the present invention easier to hold. In order to provide this utility, the size, dimension and radius of the curved proximal end must be of sufficient dimension to accommodate a child's hand, and the portion of the curved proximal end opposite the main handle must also be of sufficient

length to provide an easy means of gripping the toothbrush. These same dimensional factors also apply to the present invention such that it may easily be suspended upside down from a standard toothbrush holder commonly found in most bathrooms. The preferred embodiment of the present disclosure therefore also serves a secondary utility or function; it is not only cleaner and more sanitary than a standard toothbrush, an important function for use with children, but it is easier to use by children.

An additional object of the present invention is to provide a more aesthetically appealing toothbrush for children consisting of multiple colors, shapes and designs adding to the appeal of individuals, specifically children, that have sensory issues, in particular the syndrome of oral defensiveness. Individuals with this disorder have varied sensory responses and in some instances reject any or all stimulation. For these children, an aversion to oral stimulation, particularly brushing their teeth, would certainly lead to inadequate oral hygiene and future dental and oral difficulties. Individuals with this disorder are encouraged to use different brands of toothpaste and to experiment with different brands and sizes of toothbrushes.

Oral defensiveness is one of many problems associated with what is known as sensory integrative dysfunction. Sensory integration is best defined as the ability to take in information through the various senses and process it in conjunction with prior information and responses previously stored in the brain so as to make a meaningful response. Sensory integration occurs in the central nervous system and is generally thought to take place in the mid-brain and brainstem levels in complex interactions of the portions of the brain responsible for coordination, attention, arousal, autonomic functioning, emotions, memory, and higher level cognitive functions. Categories of

sensory integrative dysfunction include attention and regulatory problems, sensory defensiveness, and difficult and behavioral patterns.

A child with sensory integrative dysfunction may become overly sensitive to stimuli which other individuals ignore, such as, a fan, vacuum cleaner, and the like. Other children with sensory integrative dysfunction are non-responsive to stimuli. Children with these regulatory disorders often have unusual behavioral patterns and might very well over-react to certain stimuli.

A child with sensory defensiveness has a highly aroused nervous system which is unable to recognize simple stimuli as being non-threatening. This type of behavior can lead to tactile defensiveness, avoidance, withdrawal and intolerance of daily routines such as, combing and shampooing hair, cutting fingernails and brushing teeth. Oral defensiveness can cause distress with brushing teeth, dental visits and intolerance to certain textures or temperatures of food.

Auditory and visual defensiveness are additional disorders which fall under the category of sensory integrative dysfunction. Auditory defensiveness occurs with fears associated with sounds and noises of such things as lawn mowers, hair dryers, sirens and vacuum cleaners, while visual defensiveness may result from a hypersensitivity to light.

A child suffering from a sensory dysfunction might very well exhibit a change in activity including disorganization, a lack of desire to move around, a lack of variety in play activities, clumsiness, a difficulty calming down after exiting physical activity or after becoming upset and the seeking of excessive amounts of vigorous sensory input. In addition, sensory integrative dysfunction can adversely affect a child's social and emotional development. Children with this type of dysfunction often become

discouraged, develop poor self-concept, and in the case of oral defensiveness, compromise their dental and oral health.

Accordingly, various embodiments of the present invention further seek to provide such children with a more subtle approach to brushing their teeth by introducing them to a toothbrush of various colors and shapes that is more appealing and more sensitive to touch and less likely to cause oral inhibition that contributes to oral defensiveness. For children, with respect to the shape of the toothbrush itself, the handle portion is such that it may come in the form or shape of various animals, including, but not limited to, a parrot, stork, monkey, snake, alligator, dolphin, dinosaur, seal, giraffe, duck and tiger. The curved proximal end of the present disclosure forms the tails of these animals. Accordingly, the curved proximal end of the improved sanitary toothbrush provides even greater functionality by forming the tail of the animal shape of the toothbrush handle to accommodate children that are orally defensive.

2. The Prior Art.

There are several prior art references involving toothbrush storage and methods of attachment. U.S. Patents 2,725,147, 3,141,712, 4,214,657, 4,325,485, 5,566,842 and 6,119,854 all disclose different methods of toothbrush storage by way of an independent rack or holder system. U.S. Patent 2, 725, 147 references a tooth brush rack using spaced apart spring clips to suspend the toothbrushes in a spaced arrangement. U.S. Patent 3,141,712 also discloses a tooth brush holder and protector which involves the suspension of individual brushes upside down by use of independent hooks in conjunction with the openings in the respective toothbrush handles, with the device itself being covered by a protective housing. U.S. Patent 4,325,485 also references a toothbrush holder in which

individual toothbrushes are suspended upside down by their respective holes in their handles. U.S. Patent 4,214,657 discloses yet another toothbrush holder in which toothbrushes are placed upside down in individual compartments containing sponges carrying a sterilizing fluid. U.S. Patent 5,566,842 provides an analogous method of storage of toothbrushes as aforesaid with the incorporation of a toothpaste dispenser. Finally, U.S. Patent 6,119,854 references and discloses a sanitary toothbrush unit, which allows for the insertion of a toothbrush through a hole so as to rest in a sanitizing reservoir. Unlike the present invention, all of these disclosures involve complicated, bulky, and/or inconvenient apparatus, none of which present a simple, easy means of storing and maintaining a clean and sanitary toothbrush.

In conjunction with the above, there have also been several attempts to modify the toothbrush itself. U.S. Patent 4,109,339 discloses a toothbrush with a curved handle which, while not for storage, was specifically designed for providing an improved grip and easier brushing. U.S. Patent 4,523,599 discloses an attachable toothbrush by use of a magnetic mechanism to allow a brush to be suspended to a vertical wall. U.S. Patent 4,884,688 discloses a toothbrush case for holding a toothbrush and an attached reservoir for mouthwash and the like. U.S. Patent 5,400,457 references a collapsible toothbrush which does reference and disclose an independent hanger member which is coupled to the toothbrush handle to permit the hanging of the claimed brush unit after use. However, the hanger member as disclosed is not only an additive feature to the toothbrush itself but is also questionable as to its limitations with respect to its method of suspension and whether or not it may be suspended from any horizontal surface, and in particular, a common toothbrush holder found in most bathrooms. Moreover, the

hanging member does not address the multiple functions and utility of the present disclosure. U.S. Patent 5,517,713 discloses a toothbrush with a curved handle, which is designed to allow a user a more comfortable grip. Lastly U.S. Patent 5,742, 971 discloses a suction cup attachment for a toothbrush which would allow a toothbrush to be suspended from any flat, non-porous surface.

While many aforesaid disclosures reference methods of toothbrush storage, they all relate to either independent rack systems or additive features or modifications to a particular toothbrush either by way of a magnetic device, suction cup or hanging mechanism. The present version of the invention incorporates an inherent property of the toothbrush itself, namely the proximal end of the toothbrush handle, which is generally comprised of a curved shape in the form of a hook for hanging the toothbrush. This feature allows a user to store the toothbrush by hanging it in a variety of ways, and in particular, and unlike the prior art, hanging the toothbrush from a standard toothbrush holder commonly found in almost all bathrooms. In addition, none of the cited references addresses the issue of sensory dysfunction and oral defensiveness and the use of toothbrushes in the potential treatment of same, particularly as it relates to young children. Finally, the curved design of the proximal end of the handle provides for easier use by a child, as that feature of the invention cradles the child's hand for both stability and ease of use.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a new and improved sanitary toothbrush. In particular, the present invention relates to a sanitary toothbrush that is designed to hang in an upside down fashion, or by the end of the handle opposite the brush portion of the

toothbrush, and by doing so creates a cleaner and more sanitary method of storing the toothbrush after use.

There has thus been outline, rather broadly, the more important features of the invention in order that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood, and in order that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated. There are, of course, additional features of the invention that will be described hereinafter and which will form the subject matter of the claims appended hereto,

In this respect, before explaining at least one embodiment of the invention in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction and to the arrangements of the components set forth in the following description or illustrated in the drawings. The invention is capable of other embodiments and of being practiced and carried out in various ways. In addition, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology employed herein are for the purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting.

As such, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the conception, upon which this disclosure is based, may readily be utilized as a basis for the designing of other structures, methods and systems for carrying out the several purposes of the present invention. It is important, therefore, that the claims be regarded as including such equivalent construction insofar as they do not depart from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

Further, the purpose of the foregoing abstract is to enable the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and the public generally, and especially the scientists, engineers and practitioners in the art who are not familiar with patent or legal terms or phraseology, to

determine quickly from a cursory inspection the nature and essence of the technical disclosure of the application. The abstract is neither intended to define the invention of the application, which is measured by the claims, nor is it intended to be limiting as to the scope of the invention in any way.

The present version of the invention incorporates an inherent property of the toothbrush itself, namely the proximal end of the toothbrush – the end of the toothbrush handle closer to the hand when in use – which is generally comprised of a curved shape in the form of a hook for hanging the toothbrush. This feature of the proximal end of the toothbrush handle thereby allows a user to store the toothbrush by hanging it in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, hanging the toothbrush from a standard toothbrush holder. In addition, the various shapes of the toothbrush itself offer appeal in the treatment of sensory issues, specifically oral defensiveness in children, as well as providing the children with a toothbrush that is easier to use and grasp.

The present invention consists of a toothbrush in which the proximal end of the toothbrush handle – the end opposite the distal brush portion of the toothbrush – is generally comprised of a curved shape in the form of a hook for hanging the toothbrush, said curved proximal end being of sufficient size, dimension and radius to allow for the hanging or suspension of the toothbrush in an upside down position from a standard toothbrush holder, and to further accommodate a child's hand for easy gripping of the toothbrush. The hooked or curved handle of the toothbrush is not a separately added element to the toothbrush, but rather, it is integral to the toothbrush itself, comprising the same component material as the toothbrush handle and created through the same manufacturing process of the toothbrush handle, for example, by means of injection

molding. The hooked or curved portion of the proximal end of the toothbrush handle enables the brush to be suspended and stored upside down from a hook, peg, or ordinary toothbrush holder, or any other device or apparatus commonly known to those skilled in the art. This would further include any elevated horizontal surface containing an aperture or opening, such as an ordinary toothbrush holder, where the various openings of the holder are in close proximity to the edge of the elevated surface so as to allow the toothbrush to be hooked through any of said openings. Storing the toothbrush in this fashion will aid in the drying of the toothbrush, as well as decrease the opportunity for contamination by way of tabletop germs and other forms of contamination commonly found on bathroom counter tops and toothbrush holders. In addition, when the present invention is stored in this hanging fashion, water, toothpaste and mouth residues are allowed to drip free from the brush portion of the toothbrush, thereby allowing for self-cleaning of the toothbrush as it air dries. Conventional toothbrushes stored in a conventional fashion in a standard toothbrush holder, on the other hand, allow these materials to freely trickle down the toothbrush handle thereby creating a buildup over time of that residue material. With the present invention, when stored in a hanging fashion, there is no such residue buildup.

Through its unique design, the present invention also serves another utility. In particular, the handle portion of the toothbrush is designed, in addition to the basic embodiment, to come in a variety of animal shapes, including, but not limited to, a parrot, stork, monkey, snake, alligator, dinosaur, seal, giraffe, bat, duck and tiger with the hook or curved portion of the toothbrush integrated into the animal's tail. That is, the elongated intermediate portion of the toothbrush handle is designed and shaped to

represent a tailed animal, with the curved proximal end of the handle of the toothbrush forming the tail of the animal. This visually appealing and inviting feature of the present invention thereby specifically aids in the treatment of individuals, specifically children, suffering from sensory issues, and in particular, oral defensiveness. Individuals with this disorder have varied sensory responses and in some instances may reject any or all oral stimulation. For these children, there may be a fear of brushing their teeth, which may lead to inadequate oral hygiene and future dental and oral difficulties. Oral defensiveness frequently delays or inhibits oral motor stimulation needed for appropriate therapeutic intervention in those children or adults needing speech therapy. Individuals with this disorder are encouraged to use different brands of toothpaste and to experiment with different brands and sizes of toothbrushes. Accordingly, the within invention further seeks to provide such children with a more subtle approach to brushing their teeth by introducing them to a toothbrush of various colors and shapes that is more appealing and more sensitive to touch and less likely to cause inhibition and contribute to oral defensiveness.

Lastly, the curved end of the toothbrush handle allows for easy gripping and holding by adults and children with small hands and whose arm and hand strength is less than that of an adult. It is therefore a further object of the present invention to provide children with an easier means to grip the toothbrush. The curved portion of the handle will allow a child to grip the toothbrush with greater stability and security as the handle actually cradles the child's hand for ease of use. Thus, children who have difficulty holding a standard toothbrush will find the present invention easier to hold.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a fuller understanding of the nature and object of the present invention, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a rear perspective drawing of the basic embodiment of the present invention, demonstrating the curved or hook like shape of the proximal end of the handle of the toothbrush.

FIG. 2 is a side perspective drawing of the basic embodiment of the present invention, demonstrating the curved or hook like shape of the proximal end of the handle of the toothbrush.

FIG. 3 is a front perspective drawing of the basic embodiment of the present invention, demonstrating the curved or hook like shape of the proximal end of the handle of the toothbrush.

FIG. 4 is a drawing of the present invention in use, and in particular, demonstrates the hand of a child holding the toothbrush and using the invention's curved proximal end as a means of further gripping the handle of the toothbrush.

FIG. 5 is a side perspective of the present invention, wherein the handle is in the shape of a monkey with the monkey's tail forming the curved proximal end of the handle.

FIG. 6 is a side perspective of the present invention, wherein the handle is in the shape of a snake with the snake's tail forming the curved proximal end of the handle.

FIG. 7 is a side perspective of the present invention, wherein the handle is in the shape of a dinosaur with the dinosaur's tail forming the curved proximal end of the handle.

FIG. 8 is a side perspective of the present invention, wherein the handle is in the shape of a stork with the stork's tail forming the curved proximal end of the handle.

FIG. 9 is a side perspective of the present invention, wherein the handle is in the shape of a parrot with the parrot's tail forming the curved proximal end of the handle.

FIG. 10 is a side perspective of the present invention, wherein the handle is in the shape of a duck with the duck's tail forming the curved proximal end of the handle.

FIG. 11 is a side perspective of the present invention, wherein the handle is in the shape of a dolphin with the dolphin's tail forming the curved proximal end of the handle.

FIG. 12 is a side perspective of the present invention, wherein the handle is in the shape of a giraffe with the giraffe's tail forming the curved proximal end of the handle.

FIG. 13 is a side perspective of the present invention, wherein the handle is in the shape of an alligator with the alligator's tail forming the curved proximal end of the handle.

FIG. 14 is a side perspective of the present invention, wherein the handle is in the shape of a tiger with the tiger's tail forming the curved proximal end of the handle.

FIG. 15 is a side perspective of the present invention in use, and in particular, demonstrates two separate toothbrushes, one in which the handle is in the shape of a parrot and a second in which the handle is in the shape of a snake, wherein both toothbrushes are suspended upside down by their respective curved proximal ends.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

A preferred embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 1 and is generally designated as a toothbrush 10. The toothbrush 10 comprises generally a brush

unit **14** at the distal end **13** of the toothbrush **10** with an elongated handle portion **12** and a proximal end **15** comprised of curved shape in the general form of a hook **11**.

FIG. **2** is a side view of the toothbrush **10** detailing the brush unit **14** at the distal end **13**, the elongated handle **12**, and a better perspective of the curved shape **11** at the proximate end **15**.

FIG. **3** is a front perspective of the toothbrush **10** detailing the brush unit **14**, the elongated handle **12**, and a front perspective of the curved shape **11** located at the proximal end **15**.

FIG. **4** demonstrates the hand of a child **20** holding the toothbrush **10** and using the curved shape **11** of the proximal end **15** as a means of further gripping the elongated handle **12** of the toothbrush **10**. The curved shape **11** of the proximal end **15** provides further support for gripping the toothbrush **10**, which is particularly significant for children, whose arm and hand strength is less than that of an adult, and thus, may have difficulty holding a standard toothbrush

FIG. **5** is a side perspective of the toothbrush **10**, wherein the elongated handle **12** is in the shape of a monkey with the monkey's tail forming the curved shape **11** of the proximal end **15**. The utility of this embodiment of the present invention is that it provides a more aesthetically appealing and subtle means of a toothbrush for individuals suffering from oral defensiveness. Individuals with this disorder, typically children, have varied sensory responses and in some instances may reject any or all stimulation. For these children, an aversion to oral stimulation, particularly brushing their teeth, would certainly lead to inadequate oral hygiene and future dental and oral difficulties. This

embodiment of the present invention is more appealing and more sensitive to touch, and therefore, less likely to cause oral inhibition, which contributes to oral defensiveness.

FIG. 6 is a side perspective of the toothbrush 10, wherein the elongated handle 12 is in the shape of a snake with the snake's tail forming the curved shape 11 of the proximal end 15. The utility of this embodiment of the present invention is that it provides a more aesthetically appealing and subtle means of a toothbrush for individuals suffering from oral defensiveness. Individuals with this disorder, typically children, have varied sensory responses and in some instances may reject any or all stimulation. For these children, an aversion to oral stimulation, particularly brushing their teeth, would certainly lead to inadequate oral hygiene and future dental and oral difficulties. This embodiment of the present invention is more appealing and more sensitive to touch, and therefore, less likely to cause oral inhibition, which contributes to oral defensiveness.

FIG. 7 is a side perspective of the toothbrush 10, wherein the elongated handle 12 is in the shape of a dinosaur with the dinosaur's tail forming the curved shape 11 of the proximal end 15. The utility of this embodiment of the present invention is that it provides a more aesthetically appealing and subtle means of a toothbrush for individuals suffering from oral defensiveness. Individuals with this disorder, typically children, have varied sensory responses and in some instances may reject any or all stimulation. For these children, an aversion to oral stimulation, particularly brushing their teeth, would certainly lead to inadequate oral hygiene and future dental and oral difficulties. This embodiment of the present invention is more appealing and more sensitive to touch, and therefore, less likely to cause oral inhibition, which contributes to oral defensiveness.

FIG. 8 is a side perspective of the toothbrush 10, wherein the elongated handle 12 is in the shape of a stork with the stork's tail forming the curved shape 11 of the proximal end 15. The utility of this embodiment of the present invention is that it provides a more aesthetically appealing and subtle means of a toothbrush for individuals suffering from oral defensiveness. Individuals with this disorder, typically children, have varied sensory responses and in some instances may reject any or all stimulation. For these children, an aversion to oral stimulation, particularly brushing their teeth, would certainly lead to inadequate oral hygiene and future dental and oral difficulties. This embodiment of the present invention is more appealing and more sensitive to touch, and therefore, less likely to cause oral inhibition, which contributes to oral defensiveness.

FIG. 9 is a side perspective of the toothbrush 10, wherein the elongated handle 12 is in the shape of a parrot with the parrot's tail forming the curved shape 11 of the proximal end 15. The utility of this embodiment of the present invention is that it provides a more aesthetically appealing and subtle means of a toothbrush for individuals suffering from oral defensiveness. Individuals with this disorder, typically children, have varied sensory responses and in some instances may reject any or all stimulation. For these children, an aversion to oral stimulation, particularly brushing their teeth, would certainly lead to inadequate oral hygiene and future dental and oral difficulties. This embodiment of the present invention is more appealing and more sensitive to touch, and therefore, less likely to cause oral inhibition, which contributes to oral defensiveness.

FIG. 10 is a side perspective of the toothbrush 10, wherein the elongated handle 12 is in the shape of a duck with the duck's tail forming the curved shape 11 of the proximal end 15. The utility of this embodiment of the present invention is that it

provides a more aesthetically appealing and subtle means of a toothbrush for individuals suffering from oral defensiveness. Individuals with this disorder, typically children, have varied sensory responses and in some instances may reject any or all stimulation. For these children, an aversion to oral stimulation, particularly brushing their teeth, would certainly lead to inadequate oral hygiene and future dental and oral difficulties. This embodiment of the present invention is more appealing and more sensitive to touch, and therefore, less likely to cause oral inhibition, which contributes to oral defensiveness.

FIG. 11 is a side perspective of the toothbrush 10, wherein the elongated handle 12 is in the shape of a dolphin with the dolphin's tail forming the curved shape 11 of the proximal end 15. The utility of this embodiment of the present invention is that it provides a more aesthetically appealing and subtle means of a toothbrush for individuals suffering from oral defensiveness. Individuals with this disorder, typically children, have varied sensory responses and in some instances may reject any or all stimulation. For these children, an aversion to oral stimulation, particularly brushing their teeth, would certainly lead to inadequate oral hygiene and future dental and oral difficulties. This embodiment of the present invention is more appealing and more sensitive to touch, and therefore, less likely to cause oral inhibition, which contributes to oral defensiveness.

FIG. 12 is a side perspective of the toothbrush 10, wherein the elongated handle 12 is in the shape of a giraffe with the giraffe's tail forming the curved shape 11 of the proximal end 15. The utility of this embodiment of the present invention is that it provides a more aesthetically appealing and subtle means of a toothbrush for individuals suffering from oral defensiveness. Individuals with this disorder, typically children, have varied sensory responses and in some instances may reject any or all stimulation. For

these children, an aversion to oral stimulation, particularly brushing their teeth, would certainly lead to inadequate oral hygiene and future dental and oral difficulties. This embodiment of the present invention is more appealing and more sensitive to touch, and therefore, less likely to cause oral inhibition, which contributes to oral defensiveness.

FIG. 13 is a side perspective of the toothbrush 10, wherein the elongated handle 12 is in the shape of an alligator with the alligator's tail forming the curved shape 11 of the proximal end 15. The utility of this embodiment of the present invention is that it provides a more aesthetically appealing and subtle means of a toothbrush for individuals suffering from oral defensiveness. Individuals with this disorder, typically children, have varied sensory responses and in some instances may reject any or all stimulation. For these children, an aversion to oral stimulation, particularly brushing their teeth, would certainly lead to inadequate oral hygiene and future dental and oral difficulties. This embodiment of the present invention is more appealing and more sensitive to touch, and therefore, less likely to cause oral inhibition, which contributes to oral defensiveness.

FIG. 14 is a side perspective of the toothbrush 10, wherein the elongated handle 12 is in the shape of a tiger with the tiger's tail forming the curved shape 11 of the proximal end 15. The utility of this embodiment of the present invention is that it provides a more aesthetically appealing and subtle means of a toothbrush for individuals suffering from oral defensiveness. Individuals with this disorder, typically children, have varied sensory responses and in some instances may reject any or all stimulation. For these children, an aversion to oral stimulation, particularly brushing their teeth, would certainly lead to inadequate oral hygiene and future dental and oral difficulties. This

embodiment of the present invention is more appealing and more sensitive to touch, and therefore, less likely to cause oral inhibition, which contributes to oral defensiveness.

FIG. 15 is a side perspective of the present invention in use, and in particular, demonstrates, one toothbrush 10 in which the elongated handle 12 is in the shape of a parrot and a second toothbrush 10 in which the elongated handle 12 is in the shape of a snake, wherein both toothbrushes 10 are suspended upside down from a toothbrush holder 30 by their respective curved shapes 11 at their proximal ends 15.

As to the manner of usage and operation of the present invention, the same should be apparent from the above description. Accordingly, no further discussion relating to the manner of usage and operation will be provided.

With respect to the above description then, it is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention, to include variations in size, materials, shape, form, function and manner of operation, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

Therefore, the foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.